

Is Sharon Planning To Expel the Palestinians?

by Dean Andromidas

In the April 28 London *Sunday Telegraph*, Israeli military historian Martin Van Creveld warns that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is planning to launch a full-scale Mideast war. Entitled “Sharon’s Plan Is To Drive the Palestinians Across the Jordan,” Van Creveld says that Sharon’s war would last no more than eight days, two days longer than the June 1967 War.

Van Creveld confirms *EIR*’s warning, that the core of this war plan is Sharon’s “Eretz Israel” (“Greater Israel”) vision, in which Jordan is to become the Palestinian state, and the solution to eliminating the “terrorist infrastructure” is to drive the Palestinians across the Jordan River. Van Creveld notes that in September 1970, when King Hussein of Jordan attacked the Palestinians in his kingdom, Sharon argued that Israel’s policy of helping the King was a mistake, contending that Israel should have tried to topple the Hashemite regime. Sharon has never publicly renounced this conviction.

During the 1948 War, Israel drove 650,000 Palestinians from their homes into neighboring countries, Van Creveld writes. If Israel were to try something similar, including against the Palestinian territories, today, the outcome could well be a regional war. “More and more people in Jerusalem believe that such is Mr. Sharon’s objective. It might explain why Mr. Sharon, famous for his ability to plan ahead, appears not to have a plan. In fact, he has always harbored a very clear plan—nothing less than to rid Israel of the Palestinians.”

Van Creveld describes how such a scenario could come about. Sharon would wait for a suitable opportunity—such as an American offensive against Iraq, an uprising in Jordan, or a spectacular act of terrorism inside Israel. “Israel would then mobilize with lightning speed; its three ultra-modern submarines would take up firing positions out at sea; its borders would be closed, a news blackout imposed, and all foreign journalists rounded up and confined to a hotel as guests of the Israeli government.”

Israel’s 12 divisions would be deployed: five against Egypt, three against Syria, one opposite Lebanon—leaving three to face east, and still enough forces to put a tank inside every Arab-Israeli village. Van Creveld says that the expulsion of the Palestinians would require only a few brigades. “They would not drag people out of their houses but use heavy artillery to drive them out; the damage caused to Jenin would look like a pinprick in comparison.” Israeli military experts,

according to Van Creveld, estimate that the operation could be completed in eight days.

Van Creveld contends that none of Israel's Arab neighbors—Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon—has sufficient forces to stop such an Israeli action. As for Iraq, Van Creveld warns that Israel would use its nuclear arsenal: "Should Saddam be mad enough to resort to weapons of mass destruction, then Israel's response would be so 'awesome and terrible' (as Yitzhak Shamir, the former Prime Minister, once said) as to defy imagination."

Van Creveld, discounting Europe, writes that the only country that could stop Sharon would be the United States. However, the United States "regards itself at war with parts of the Muslim world that have supported Osama bin Laden. America will not necessarily object to that world being taught a lesson—particularly if it could be as swift and brutal as the 1967 campaign; and also particularly if it does not disrupt the flow of oil for too long."

In an interview with *EIR*, Van Creveld elaborated on how Americans would back Sharon under certain conditions. "What if there is a massive new act of terrorism in America, another Twin Towers? Or what if we read some days from now, in the *New York Times*, that there was a vast Saudi plot, cooperating with bin Laden, for Sept. 11? Under such circumstances, the Americans . . . would certainly tolerate such a Sharon design."

EIR asked him about the possibility that Israel itself might engineer a giant act of terrorism in the United States. He responded: "Why should I be upset? . . . We got burned doing those kinds of things in the 1950s [referring to the "Lavon Affair," when Israeli agents were caught setting off bombs in Egypt against American installations, in order to get the Americans to move against the Nasser regime]. . . . If you go onto the Internet chat rooms here, you can read ordinary Israelis, regularly, suggesting that the Mossad deliberately commit a giant act of terrorism in the U.S., make sure the Arabs are blamed, and use the opportunity to make the Americans support whatever we do. These are crazy ideas, but you can read them on the Internet."

Armchair Speculation, or a Warning?

The momentum of events in the Mideast and Washington confirms Van Creveld's ugly musings. Sharon's war plans parallel Washington's drive for a war on Iraq now being led by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and the circles around Zbigniew Brzezinski. Their aim is not to build a 1990s-style anti-Iraq Arab and Western European coalition (which would be rewarded with a Madrid peace conference), but to launch a "Clash of Civilizations." As it stands now, no European country, let alone Arab nation, fully supports a war against Iraq, and none is expected to do so in the near future. Van Creveld told *EIR* that he sees a great deal of reticence to attack Iraq among elements of both the U.S. Establishment and the U.S. population. So,

why not let Sharon start a war now?

Sharon's war drive is getting its greatest support from among American Christian fundamentalists, who have threatened to wreck Republican prospects in November's mid-term elections if the Bush Administration pressures Sharon.

An Israeli historian expressed to *EIR* grave concern about the political strength of these layers. "I have been watching this matter of the Christian fundamentalists and Israel for some time. I was very struck today, by a report I heard on the radio, that 50 million conservative Christian Americans who back Israel, have been mobilizing to put pressure on George W. Bush to support Israel, and to resist the United Nations on the Jenin question. This, of course, is a very large number, but I treat it as credible." He added: "The work of Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been cultivating these Christian conservatives for a decade, is now paying off."

Bush is moving to consolidate his ties to the Christian right. He has named Jay Lefkowitz, director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, to be the administration's liaison to Congress and the evangelicals. Lefkowitz, a former law partner with former "Get Clinton" Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, is a neo-conservative operative, known for his strong ties to the Christian right, and as being an ardent Zionist.

The Israeli historian expressed fear that the Bush Administration has been won over to Sharon's intent to kill Palestinian Authority President Arafat. "The basic premise of the Sharon government, is that the Palestinian Authority is a terrorist organization, and that Arafat is the arch-terrorist. The American Administration has been won over to that view, or at least Sharon is certainly convinced of that. So what I think will happen, is that Arafat will be released from his confinement in Ramallah, but then, there will be a major suicide bombing killing Israelis, and there will be a shoot-out, and in the shoot-out, Arafat will be killed."

Clearly a deal was struck between the White House and Israel, to let Arafat out of his Ramallah headquarters, in return for cancelling the UN investigative team which was to have probed whether Israel committed a massacre at Jenin. President Bush did not lift a finger to support the commission, in the face of Sharon's arrogant rejection of it. Rather, Bush rewarded him by inviting him to the White House, despite the fact he refused Bush's demand that Israel withdraw from Palestinian territories.

Meanwhile in Israel, a senior military source said, "Everyone is waiting for the next round of terrorist attacks" which will lead to another "Operation Defensive Shield."

The Israeli 'Wallenstein's Army'

Van Creveld writes that after launching such a war, "Israel would stand triumphant as it did in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973." But on the ninth day, it would lose the war. Sharon is leading Israel to a suicide as certain as that of the pilots who flew the Boeing 757 airliners into the World Trade Center

and Pentagon on Sept. 11. Sharon might succeed in driving the Palestinians out of the West Bank, but a religious Thirty Years War would begin that would destroy Israel. Its arsenal of nuclear weapons would not save it.

Van Creveld's assessment of the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) military strength is, at best, based on memories of past victories. The brutal attack on the Jenin refugee camp has confirmed everything *EIR* reported about how Operation Defensive Shield was planned following the IDF studies of how the Nazis destroyed the Warsaw Ghetto. The latest operations have also exposed how the Israeli IDF has degenerated, from the world's fourth-largest and most powerful military establishment, into a "Wallenstein's Army" of mercenaries like those that ravaged Germany during the Thirty Years War.

Throughout the recent military operations, the IDF has engaged in widespread looting and vandalism. Unnamed IDF sources told the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, "There was indeed a wide-scale, ugly phenomenon of vandalism. . . . The infantry, both the conscripts and the reservists who accompanied the intelligence teams, understood that they were allowed—or indeed, expected—to destroy the property in the offices. The result was damage running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Soldiers smashed computer monitors and destroyed keyboards. There were places in which bank branches were destroyed and automatic tellers were raided. In some cases, theft accompanied the vandalism. It was significant damage, widespread and totally illogical."

Commenting on Van Creveld's assertion that Israel would emerge victorious in eight days, one senior Israeli military source who took part in the 1973 war said, "Theoretically, eight days is possible, but from the performance of the IDF during Operation Defensive Shield such a war will be a disaster, not just for the Palestinians but for Israel as well." The source reported that although everyone is saying publicly that the operation was a great success, a closer look shows otherwise.

Israeli military commentator Reuven Pedatzur, in *Ha'aretz*, gave some insight into the IDF failures: "The military activity did not always excel at efficiency and professionalism. . . ? The IDF's explanation that not using the Air Force and artillery was the reason for what went wrong in Jenin, cannot hide the fact that the Army was forced to fight for more than ten days and pay a high price in human lives to take over a refugee camp where a few dozen fighters were hiding. The failure was inherent in faulty planning, improper



Columbine High School, April 1999? No, this was done by the Israeli Defense Forces, to the Al-Nasr TV studios in Palestine. IDF sources told Ha'aretz, "There was indeed a widespread ugly phenomenon of vandalism. . . . The extent of the looting was much greater than could have been expected. This is an ugly and serious phenomenon."

use of forces, and lack of foreseeing the results. If the decision was made to occupy a refugee camp, why do it after more than a week of fighting, thereby giving the Palestinians ample time to prepare for the battle. . . ? It makes no difference that the IDF managed to occupy the camp—in any case the battle will go down as the Stalingrad of the Palestinian nation. And that doesn't count the insensitivity and basic lack of understanding on the part of those who spent more than ten days preventing humanitarian aid from reaching the camp. So far, nobody has explained what made the IDF decide to prevent doctors from entering Jenin to treat the wounded and evacuate the corpses."

The IDF's incompetence went so far as failing to supply food for its own troops! "When the post-operation inquiries take place, another matter for investigation will be the scandalously unprepared reserve force. Why wasn't there food for the reservists? Why, more than a week after being drafted, did fighters have to make do, at the end of a day's combat, with candy from the Shekem canteen? If that's the level of logistical readiness in the Army, there's reason to worry." Soldiers reported that, in many cases, after a day of fighting, family members and friends came to the battlefield with food and refreshment, not the Army.

Pedatzur writes that far from destroying "terrorist infrastructure," the IDF "destroyed the civil infrastructures, like electricity, water, and computer systems, as well as the political leadership. Will that prevent terror in the future? The IDF answer came without hesitation; on the contrary, the motivation to harm Israelis and take revenge has only grown."